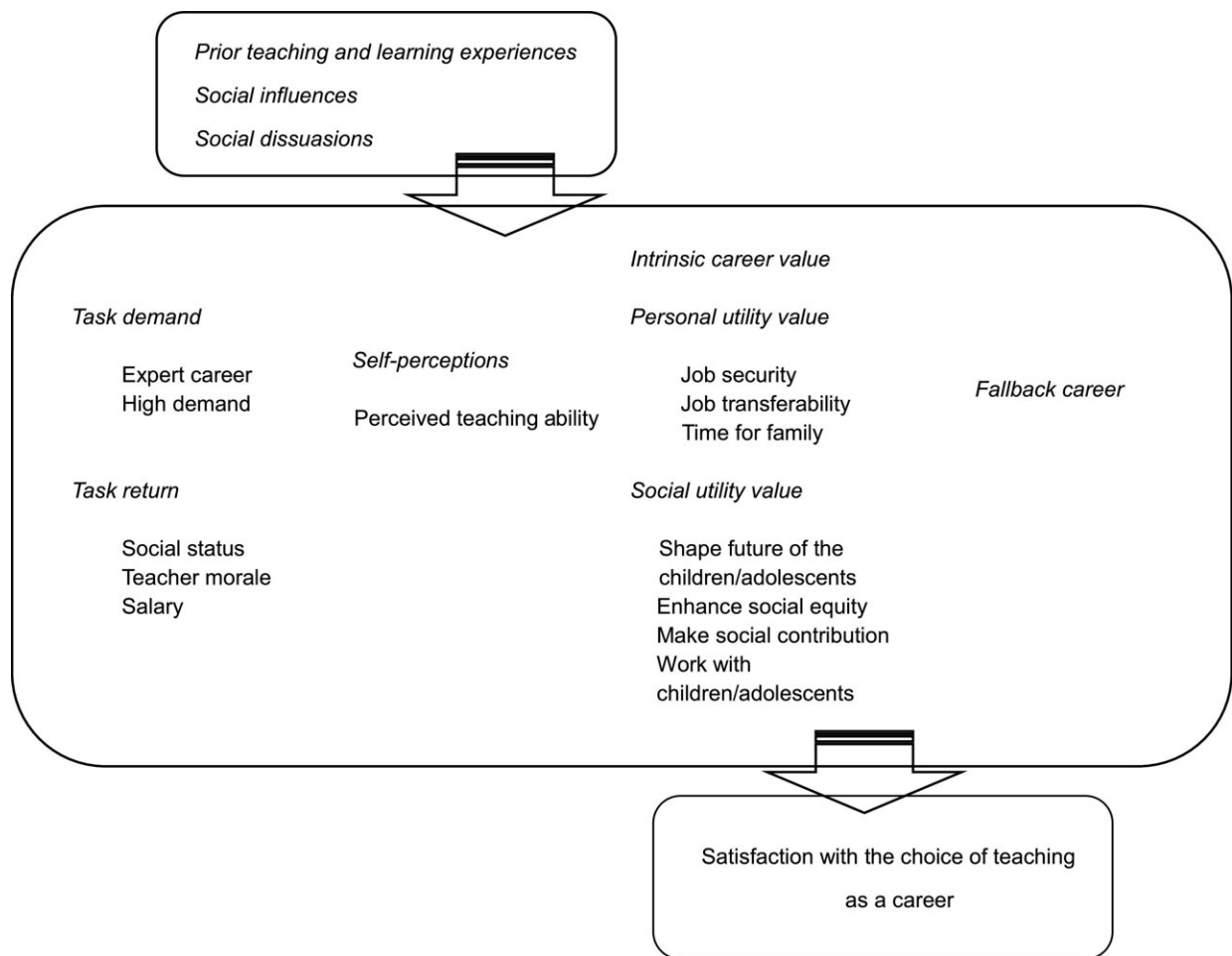


# What drives students to take up teaching? A new study explores aspirations and challenges

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Theoretical model (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Credit: *International Journal of Educational Research Open* (2024). DOI: 10.1016/j.ijedro.2024.100330

As role models and mentors for the youth, teachers play an important role in guiding children into well-rounded adults. However, excessive workloads and high skill expectations have allegedly led to teacher shortages in Japan.

In 2022, the Ministry of Education Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) reported a record low in applicants for primary school teaching positions, and a survey from the same year revealed that 65.8% of 924 full-time educators expressed a desire to quit due to overwhelming demands.

To address the teacher shortage, Associate Professor Akihiro Saito from Tokyo University of Science Institute of Arts and Sciences wanted to better understand the [motivations](#) and factors influencing an individual's decision to pursue a [career](#) in teaching.

"I have seen many students drop out of teaching programs or take a job other than teaching even after obtaining their teaching license. By understanding the motivations and career perceptions of students, we can develop strategies for recruiting and retaining educators," says Dr. Saito.

[In a study published in the \*International Journal of Educational Research Open\*](#), Dr. Saito modified The Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) framework to assess the motivations of undergraduate students pursuing a four-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) program in primary and [secondary education](#).

The FIT-Choice framework, initially developed for Australian pre-service teacher education candidates, considers 18 factors, including 12 motivations and 6 perception factors, that contribute to shaping an individual's choice in teaching.

Motivations for becoming a teacher include personal success factors (job

security, family time, and job transferability), altruistic motivations (desire for social contribution and working with children), an individual's perception of their teaching ability, the career value, whether they view teaching as a fallback option, [social influences](#), and past school experiences.

Perception factors, on the other hand, consider the difficulty of the job, the [social status](#) and salary associated with teaching, social dissuasions against teaching, and the overall fulfillment derived from teaching.

From the responses of 202 students, the study finds that Japanese students pursue a teaching career mostly due to a positive school experience, followed by a perceived intrinsic value in teaching and a strong desire to work with children and adolescents. Social influences and the idea of teaching as a fallback career were found to be the least significant motivations driving their choice.

Students who decided to become teachers early on appreciated the specialized skills required for the profession and were satisfied with their career choices. However, the demanding skills also led some students to consider alternative career paths outside of teaching.

While the findings do not offer immediate solutions for the teacher shortages and hiring challenges, they shed light on the motivations and obstacles faced by aspiring teachers.

"By providing a versatile scale for understanding the motivations of [students](#) who wish to become [teachers](#) and their perceptions of the teaching profession, the results of this research will help to understand the perceptions of the parties behind the problems," says Dr. Saito.

These insights can lead to long-term solutions to address teacher challenges, such as developing more effective teacher training programs,

cultivating teaching as a genuinely fulfilling career, and implementing recruitment strategies to attract those with a passion for teaching.

**More information:** Akihiro Saito, "I chose to receive teacher training because ..." Motivations for teaching and career aspirations among teacher education students in Japan, *International Journal of Educational Research Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ijedro.2024.100330](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2024.100330)

Provided by Tokyo University of Science

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